DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 634 CG 014 123

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TITLE Relocation and Alienation: Support for Stokols' Social Psychological Theory.
PUB DATE 4 Sep 79
NOTE 21p.: Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (87th, New York, NY, September 1-5, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitudes: Gerontology: Housing Needs: Life Style: Multiple Regression Analysis: Neighborhood: *Older Adults: *Participant Satisfaction: Quality of Life: *Relocation: *Residential Patterns
IDENTIFIERS *Alienation

ABSTRACT

The extent to which Stokols' model of alienation could be applied to the relocation of elderly into age-homogeneous communal residences was investigated by interviewing 50 residents of two homes for the aged and one senior citizen apartment complex. Three types of regression analyses were performed to test the hypothesis that simultaneously feeling thwarted from the old neighborhood, holding negative attitudes toward the old neighborhood, and maintaining association with those from the old neighborhood would create feelings of alienation among residents. In two of these anlayses, this interaction provided a significant increment in the prediction of alienation scores. The third, ultraconservative regression analysis, did not yield a significant effect. Results suggest that administrators of communal housing for the aged should stress within residence associations rather than force continued association of thwarted elderly with people from their own community. (Author)

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RELOCATION AND ALIENATION: SUPPORT FOR STOKOLS' SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, New York, New York, September 4, 1979

CG 014123

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Traditional theories of alienation make two assumptions: First, alienation involves a large group of people. The group may be distinguished along sociological dimensions such as the alienated working class of Karl Marx (1963) or the group may consist of all individuals, that is, alienation is viewed as a general state of mankind exemplified in the writings of Hegel (1952) and Fromm (1941).[1] The second assumption of traditional theories of alienation is that alienation is the result of some fault in the structure of society. For Marx and Fromm, the fault is capitalism. For Hegel, any society inherently fosters alienation because society gives an "objective" definition of man with which no individual can identify him/herself.

There are a few theorists, such as Seeman (1959) and Nettler (1957), who define alienation as an affective state of a given individual, but the focus is still on the individual and the whole of society.

Recent empirical evidence suggests that alienation is an affective state of a given individual and involves the interaction of the individual with other individuals instead of with society. Larson (1974), for example, found variations in feelings of alienation among persons living in public housing for the elderly. He also found alienation to be inversely related to the extent of interpersonal interaction the residents had with outside friends.

Stokols (1975) developed what appears to be the first theory to describe

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[1] See Schacht, R. Alienation, Anchor Books, Garden City, New York, 1971 for an excellent review of the major theories of alienation.

alienation from this individual, social psychological perspective. His theory integrates the concepts of frustration, attitude and dyadic relationship to explain feelings of alienation. According to Stokols, alienation is an intrapsychic process that has its roots in the thwarting or frustration of a relationship between a person and another person, group or entity. If the thwarting results in a negative attitude in the person toward the entity, alienation will be experienced if the individual is unable to leave the relationship. Stokols' theory presents a conjunctive model in which thwarting, negative attitude toward the alienating entity, and continued association with the entity must be present simultaneously in order for alienation to result.

The relocation of elderly into homes for the aged or senior citizen apartment complexes provided an interesting ground on which to realize the concepts of Stokols' theory and to evaluate its soundness empirically. Oftentimes, elderly individuals feel forced by their families to enter institutions. Forced relocation may result in the thwarting of the relationship between the elderly and their past social networks/neighborhood. This frustration may lead to the development of negative attitudes in the elderly toward the old neighborhood.

In many institutions, it is administrative policy that the elderly resident maintain association with family members. If this forced association exists simultaneously with forced relocation and negative attitudes toward the old neighborhood, the individual is predicted to feel alienated.

This operational definition of Stokols' theory is presented in Figure 1.

- Place Figure 1 About Here -

METHOD

Respondents

Respondents were 42 females and 8 males residing in two homes for the aged and one senior citizen apartment complex in the Detroit area. The ages of these residents ranged from 65 to 96 years, with a mean age of 79 years. All residents had been living in the institution at least one year. Initially, a list of 80 names had been gathered to be used in the sample. However, at the time of data collection, 18 people had died, 2 moved from the residence, one subject could not speak English, 4 refused to participate and 5 people could not be reached.

Because some of the homes were an hour long drive from the interviewer's residence, a maximum of 4 attempts were made to contact subjects before they were dropped from the sample.

Measures

To measure the components of Stokols' theory, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the residents. The interview contained several groups of close-ended and open-ended format questions and lasted about 20 minutes.

Thwarting

A total of 5 questions comprised the measure of thwarting. Two of these inquired into the resident's reasons for moving, and the remaining three asked who made the decision for the resident(R) to move, the desire R had, and the difficulty involved if R wanted to return to the old neighborhood. Scores on each item ranged from 0 to 2; 0 indicating a low score on the thwarting dimension (such as, "I wanted to move here." or "It would be very easy to move back to my old neighborhood."); 1 indicating an intermediate score (such as, "My illness caused me to move here." or "It would be difficult but not impossible to move back to my old neighborhood."); and 2 indicating a high score for thwarting (such as, "My family wanted me to move here." or "It would be impossible for me to move back to my old neighborhood."). Scores on each item were summed to yield a single measure of thwarting. Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency (Nunnally, 1967), the reliability for this scale was 0.42. This relatively low coefficient was expected given the heterogeniety of the items used to measure thwarting.

Attitude Toward the Old Neighborhood

Attitude toward the old neighborhood was obtained using 10 pairs of bipolar adjectives that loaded high on Osgood's evaluative dimension (Osgood, et al., 1957). For each pair of words, respondents were asked to indicate which of the pair best described their old neighborhood. (For example, Rs were asked, "When you lived there, did you feel your old

place was relaxed or tense... nice or awful... unfriendly or friendly... etc. ") The pairs of adjectives were randomly distributed in terms of whether the positive item was read first or second. A score of 1 was given for each positive adjective R chose, and 0 was given for each negative adjective chosen. Items were summed to yield a single measure of attitude toward the old neighborhood, and the alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.84.

Association with the Old Neighborhood

Thirteen items were used to measure R's perceived association with the old neighborhood. Seven of these items were taken from previous interviews held with Rs during a study conducted by Kahana and Kahana (1975). These items inquired into: (1) feelings of closeness with people from the old neighborhood vs. people from the institution; (2) if R "talks things over" with people from the old neighborhood vs. people in the present institution; (3, 4) if the people R feels close to and talks things over with are the same people R felt close to and talked things over with before moving; and (5) the difficulty R has had staying in touch with friends and relatives. The "closeness" and "talk things over with" items were measured twice during the time of the Kahana and Kahana study, and thus both sets of items were used in the present study yielding the total of 7 items. The remaining six items of the "association scale were measured during the interview and asked: (1) if any of the people R spends time with were his/her friend before R moved; (2) whether these people lived in the old neighborhood while R was there; (3, 4) R was asked if s/he still visits with relatives and

old neighborhood friends, and (5, 6) how often R saw them.

Ten of the items of the association scale were scored dichotomously, with 0 indicating a low score on association with the old neighborhood (e. g., R talks things over with staff of the institution), and 1 indicating a high score on association (e. g., R talks things over with old friends from the neighborhood). The item inquiring into the difficulty R has had staying in touch with friends and family was scored from 0 to 4, 0 indicating very much difficulty and 4 indicating no difficulty. The two items inquiring as to the relative frequency of visiting friends and relatives now, compared with before the move, was scored from 0 to 2, 0 indicating spending less time with relatives/friends now, 1 indicating that R spends about the same amount of time, and 2 indicating that R spends more time with friends/relatives now compared to when s/he lived in the old neighborhood.

The 3 items forming the association with the old neighborhood scale were summed to get a single score for each R. The alpha coefficient for this scale was 0. 73.

Alienation

The dependent measure of alienation was a shortened and modified version of Dean's Alienation Scale. Dean developed a questionnaire measure of alienation (Dean, 1961) based upon feelings of normlessness, powerlessness and social isolation as described by Seeman (1959). This scale was found to correlate with other self-report measures of alienation (Nettler, 1957; Robinson and Shaver, 1973; Srole, 1956 and Tolor, 1974) and measured

concepts likely to be present in an aged and institutionalized population.

When pretests of the entire interview schedule were conducted, the necessity of three modifications of Dean's scale became apparent. First, inclusion of the entire scale made the interview too long. Second, the 5-point response set was too difficult to administer in this case. Third, the elderly Rs were having difficulty responding to the more abstract items. This third point is consistent with previous research on intelligence testing with the elderly which indicate that their motivation and performance are increased when tasks are more concrete (Hulicka, 1967; Kogan, 1974).

In order to remedy the situation, the original 24 item, 5 response scale of alienation was pared to 16 dichotomous items. These items were chosen because they represented all three dimensions of the original scale, and they were the more concrete or meaningful items. Rejected items from Dean's scale included such statements as, "The end often justifies the means." (measure of normlessness); "There is little chance for promotion on the job unless a man gets a break." (powerlessness); and "There are few dependable ties between people anymore." (social isolation). Retained items, sometimes reworded for even greater clarity, included statements such as, "Sometimes I feel all alone in the world." (social isolation); "The only thing one can be sure of today is that he can be sure of nothing." (reworded: "One can never be sure of anything nowadays.") (normlessness); and "The future looks very dismal." (powerlessness).

Agreement with each item on the revised scale was scored 0 if the

response was low on alienation and 1 if the response was high on alienation. This scoring procedure followed that used by Dean (1961).

Cronbach's alpha for this modified scale was 0. 59.

Other Measures

Measures of age, sex, health and attitude toward the present residence were used as control variables in the study because it seemed possible that each of these might be associated with feelings of alienation. Age, sex and health measures were obtained from prior research with these subjects (c. f. Kahana and Kahana, 1975).

A health scale consisted of 8 items concerning: (1) R's subjective rating of health; (2) health compared to 3 or 4 months ago; (3) any illness or health problem R has had in the past 4 or 5 months; (4) presence of hearing or vision problems; (5) time spent in the infirmary or hospital; (6, 7) visits with doctors or specialists; and (8) special medical tests R had since entering the institution. Present rating of health and change in health were scored on a five point scale, 0 indicating excellent health or very positive change in health, and 4 indicating very poor health or very negative change in health. Five items were scored dichotomously with a 0 given to those responses indicating good health (e. g., no hearing or vision problems, no special tests), and 1 given to those responses indicating poor health (e.g., having seen a specialist or having hearing problems). The final item on the scale, whether R had been in an infirmary or hospital since entering the institution was scored on a 4-point scale, 0 indicating that R had been in

neither, 1 indicating R had been in the infirmary, 2 that R was in a hospital and 3 that s/he had been in both. This health scale had an alpha coefficient of 0. 59.

Finally, the "attitude toward the present residence" scale, using the same ten bipolar adjectives as the "attitude toward the old neighborhood" scale, was used to control for a general state of negativism that might account for expressed feelings of alienation. The alpha coefficient for this scale was 0. 20 presumably due to the residents' unwillingness to say anything negative about their present living situation.

RESULTS

Statistically, Stokols' theory requires the presence of the three-way interaction of thwarting, association with the old neighborhood and negative attitudes toward the old neighborhood. Significance of this interaction in a regression equation which also included the main effects of the components of the three-way interaction, their two-way interactions and control variables would suggest that all three components of the interaction must be present simultaneously in order to predict alienation, as originally stated by Stokols.

Three multiple regression analyses were used to test the theory. The most liberal test involved a hierarchical regression (Cohen and Cohen, 1975) in which the three-way interaction of frustration with the old neighborhood, attitude toward the old neighborhood and association with the old

neighborhood was entered into the regression after demographic variables but before all two-way interactions and main effects. (See Table 1) In this analysis, the hypothesized three-way interaction yielded a significant ($F_{1,43} = 8.90$) increment in R^2 when it entered the equation ($P = .01$).

A more conservative test consisted of a stepwise regression of all main effects, two-way and three-way interactions and demographic variables. In this analysis, shown in Table 2, the hypothesized three-way interaction entered into the regression third, after attitude toward one's present residence and age. The three-way interaction again yielded a significant increment in R^2 ($F_{1,43} = 5.82$, $P = .05$).

The most conservative test of Stokols' theory involved a hierarchical regression in which the three-way interaction was forced into the equation last. (See Table 3) In this regression, the three-way interaction did not yeild a significant increment in R^2. It may have been a too conservative test for a conjunctive theory of this kind, especially since all main effects and two-way interactions often highly correlated with the three-way interaction, were partialled from the regression before the three-way interaction had a chance to demonstrate its predictive power.

Even greater support for Stokols' theory can be gleaned by closer inspection of the three regression equations. Only one component of the theory, attitude toward the old neighborhood, showed a main effect in any of the regressions, and this being the regression which forced the three-way interaction to wait until it was the last variable to enter the equation. The

two-way interaction, thwarting x attitude toward the old neighborhood, also accounted for significant variation in alienation, but this was also in the second hierarchical regression when the three-way interaction was not allowed to enter the regression until the end. Thwarting x association with the old neighborhood was significant in the first hierarchical regression, but did not attain significance in the stepwise regression.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that Stokols' hypothesized three-way interaction of thwarting x attitude toward the old neighborhood x association with the old neighborhood was the best predictor of alienation. It accounted for a significant amount of variance in feelings of alienation in two of the three regressions, and preceded the entry of main effects and two-way interactions in the stepwise regressions when not intentionally placed before or after the main effects and two-way interactions.

A word must be added concerning the significance of attitudinal variables in the three regressions. Although there is strong support for Stokols' theory in our data, it should be noted that except for the thwarting x association with the old neighborhood interaction, all significant main effects and interactions involve at least one of the attitude variables. Perhaps Dean's scale involves a fourth dimension, namely an attitudinal component that is correlated with feelings of alienation. Only further research could determine the validity of this dimension.

DISCUSSION

Stokols' theory of alienation resembles other social psychological theories such as the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard, et al., 1939), Brehm's reactance theory (Brehm, 1966), and Thibaut and Kelley's comparison level theory (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). All four theories involve frustration from a particular person, group or entity. However, these theories are not mutually exclusive. The validity of Stokols' theory provided by this study makes salient the need to empirically distinguish the relationship among these four frustration hypotheses.

Further research should be directed toward a longitudinal study of Stokols' theory to capture the process orientation involved in this social psychological phenomenon. In this study, attitude toward the old neighborhood was a retrospective measure and may have been contaminated by cognitive processes occurring within the individual. In other words, since the individual has left the old neighborhood, attitude theories would suggest that the individual would come to feel negatively about the neighborhood (Bem, 1976; Festinger, 1957). In this study, all residents had left their neighborhood at least one year from the time of the interview. A more accurate test of Stokols' theory might be to look at thwarting presently occurring in the residents' lives.

There is a need to measure alienation more specifically related to the situation, as Martin, et al. (1971) attempt to do. Stokols' theory received support in this study using a more global measure of alienation.

A more accurate test of his theory would be attained if the alienation measure specifically focused upon alienation from old friends and relatives.

Given the above limitations, there are significant implications of the findings for administrators of residential facilities serving older people. Corrective measures based on this model can be taken to prevent alienation from developing among relocated aged.

Specifically, making sure the aged individual has an important role in the decision to relocate should prevent feelings of frustration and the development of negative attitudes toward old relatives and friends. If the administrator of the residence finds that an individual was forced to leave the old neighborhood and has negative attitudes toward old friends and relatives, a good policy may be to involve the resident with other residents of the facility rather than insisting that the individual maintain relations with their old neighborhood.

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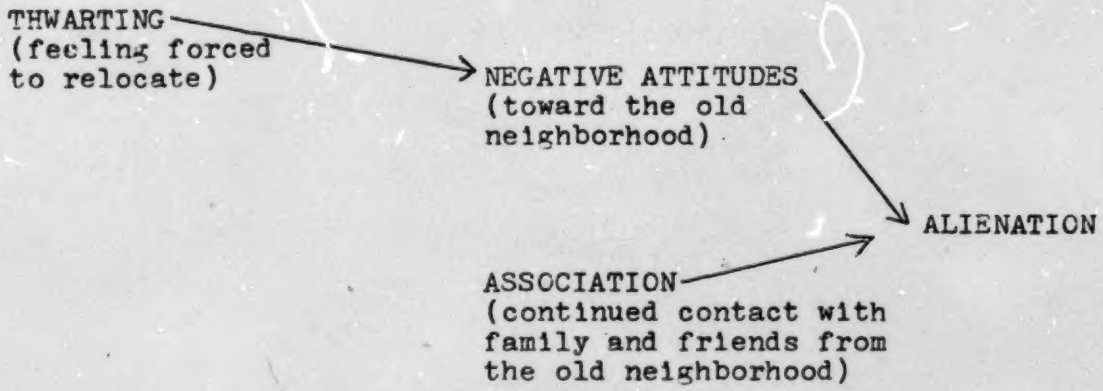

FIGURE 1: Stokols' Theory Applied to Relocation of the Aged

TABLE 1

HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, MAIN EFFECTS AND ALL INTERACTIONS[1,2,3]

STEP	VARIABLE NAME	SIMPLE r	MULTIPLE R^2	F for R^2 CHANGE
1	AGE	.21	.05	2.01
2	SEX	.18	.06	.70
3	HEALTH	.04	.07	.62
4	THWARTING x ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.30	.24	8.90**
5	THWARTING x ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.27	.26	.94
6	ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	-.31	.34	4.85**
7	THWARTING	.28	.36	.71
8	ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	-.17	.36	.05
9	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.	-.20	.36	.01
10	THWARTING x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.13	.44	5.03*
11	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	.18	.50	4.24*
12	THWARTING x ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.	.31	.51	.45
13	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.18	.51	.23
14	ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.31	.52	.11

[1]N = 45
[2]Three-way interactions follow demographic variables
[3]Two-way interactions entered last
[4]F value for step one is for overall R^2

* $P \leq .05$
** $P \leq .01$

TABLE 2

STEPWISE REGRESSION
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, MAIN EFFECTS AND ALL INTERACTIONS[1]

STEP	VARIABLE NAME	SIMPLE r	MULTIPLE R^2	F for R^2 CHANGE
1	ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	-.31	.10	4.69* [2]
2	AGE	.21	.16	3.29
3	THWARTING x ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.30	.27	5.82*
4	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	.18	.33	2.03
5	ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.31	.38	3.32
6	SEX	.18	.40	.86
7	THWARTING	.28	.40	.32
8	THWARTING x ASSOC. OLD NEIGH.	.13	.42	.80
9	ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	-.17	.47	3.39
10	THWARTING x ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.	.31	.49	1.06
11	HEALTH	.04	.50	.85
12	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.18	.51	1.02
13	THWARTING x ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	.29	.52	.15
14	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.	-.20	.52	.08

[1] N = 45
[2] F value is for overall R^2

* $P \leq .05$

TABLE 3

SECOND HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, MAIN EFFECTS AND ALL INTERACTIONS[1,2,3]

STEP	VARIABLE NAME	SIMPLE r	MULTIPLE R^2	F for R^2 CHANGE
1	AGE	.21	.05	
2	SEX	.18	.06	.70
3	HEALTH	.04	.07	.62
4	THWARTING x ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.	.31	.24	8.80**
5	ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.31	.28	2.34
6	THWARTING x ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	.29	.33	2.36
7	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	.18	.34	.57
8	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH.	.18	.34	.16
9	ATTIT. PRES. RESIDENCE	-.31	.38	2.48
10	THWARTING x ASSOC. OLD NEIGH.	.13	.39	.16
11	ATTIT. OLD NEIGH.	-.20	.47	5.10*
12	THWARTING	.28	.49	1.41
13	ASSOC. OLD NEIGH.	-.17	.49	.27
14	THWARTING x ATTIT. OLD NEIGH. x ASSOC. WITH OLD NEIGH	.30	.52	1.39

[1]Two-way interactions follow demographic variables
[2]Three-way interactions entered last
[3] N = 45

* P = .05
** P = .01